



**Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services**  
**Office of Primary Care and Rural Health**

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## **Missouri's Dentists- 2014**

General dentistry is defined as the evaluation, diagnosis, prevention and/or treatment (nonsurgical, surgical or related procedures) of diseases, disorders and/or conditions of the oral cavity, maxillofacial area and/or the adjacent and associated structures and their impact on the human body; provided by a dentist, within the scope of his/her education, training and experience, in accordance with the ethics of the profession and applicable law.<sup>1</sup> In Missouri, a dentist is partially defined as one who diagnoses, prescribes for, or treats any disease, pain, deformity, injury, or physical condition of human teeth or adjacent structures or treats any disease or disorder or lesions of the oral regions.<sup>2</sup>

Dentists receive licensure in Missouri through the Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions, and Professional Registration, Dental Board. Basic demographic information on all dental licensees is available from the Dental Board's publicly reported data.<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this report, this data is supplemented by mandatory information collected through registrations submitted to the DHSS Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD) by way of the Missouri Healthcare Workforce Registry and Exchange (MoHWoRx) and by voluntary survey information collected through the Missouri Health Professionals Registry, an information system developed by DHSS to help health professionals meet state registration requirements and to provide comprehensive and timely information on health care access statewide.<sup>4</sup>

This report serves to provide a baseline assessment of Missouri's dental workforce. Following closely on the heels of the DHSS report, *Dental Hygiene Workforce Analysis 2014*, this assessment aids in better understanding Missouri's oral health professional workforce.<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that the information in this report was obtained on April 2, 2014 and is current as of that date. Additionally, due to the use of two dynamic data sets, discrepancies in total numbers may occur.

<sup>1</sup> American Dental Association. *General Dentistry*. Accessed May 16, 2014 at <http://www.ada.org/en/education-careers/careers-in-dentistry/general-dentistry>.

<sup>2</sup> Missouri Revised Statutes, Chapter 332, Dentists.

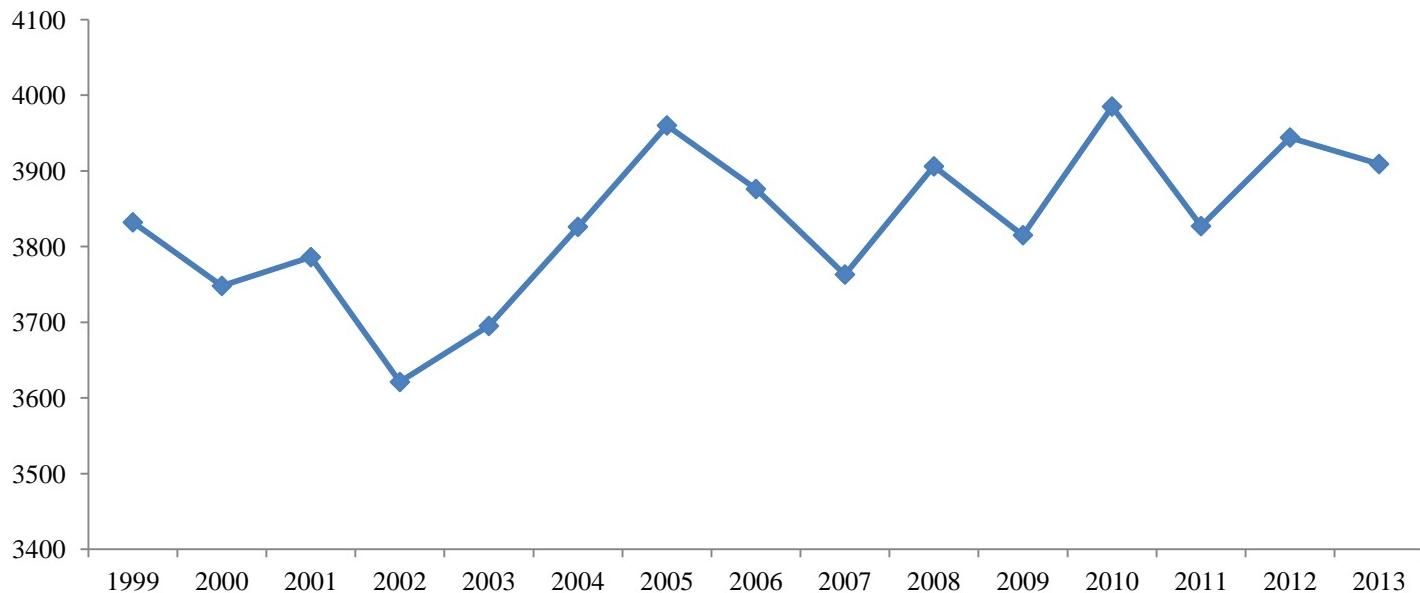
<sup>3</sup> Missouri Division of Professional Registration, Dental Board, Downloadable Listings, Accessed April 2, 2014 at <http://pr.mo.gov/listings-den.asp>.

<sup>4</sup> Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Missouri Healthcare Workforce Registry and Exchange, <http://health.mo.gov/professionals/index.php>.

<sup>5</sup> Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Publications, *Dental Hygiene Workforce Analysis 2014*. Available at <http://health.mo.gov/living/families/primarycare/publications.php>

## Total Dentists

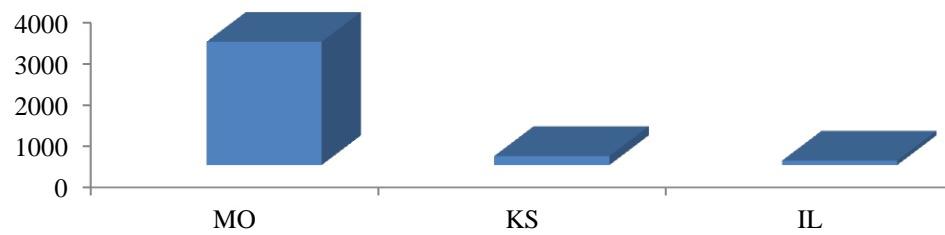
Missouri currently licenses 4,000 dentists. The absolute number of licensees shows a slight upward trend since State Fiscal Year (SFY) 1999, with a low of 3,621 licensees in SFY 2002, and a previous high of 3,985 licenses in SFY 2010 (Figure 1).<sup>6</sup>



**Figure 1.** Total Dental Licensees by State Fiscal Year

## Dentists in Missouri

Of the 4,000 current dental licensees, 3,274 (81.9%) list a primary practice or contact address in Missouri (Figure 2). Overall, Missouri has a population-to-dentist ratio of 1,846:1.<sup>7</sup> This ratio suggests an adequate supply of dentists exists in Missouri when viewed from a statewide perspective.<sup>8</sup> However, as shown in Figures 3 and 4, the distribution of dentists listing a primary practice or contact address in Missouri varies widely. In areas classified as urban, there are 2,523 dentists (population to dentist ratio of 1,503:1) while in areas of Missouri classified as rural there are 751 dentists (population to dentist ratio of 2,969:1).<sup>9</sup> It should be particularly noted that five counties (Mercer, Ralls, Shannon, Wayne, and Worth) have no dentist listing a contact address or primary practice location within its borders. This type of “geographic maldistribution” is known to have significant effects on access to oral health services.<sup>8</sup>



**Figure 2.** Dental Licensees by State

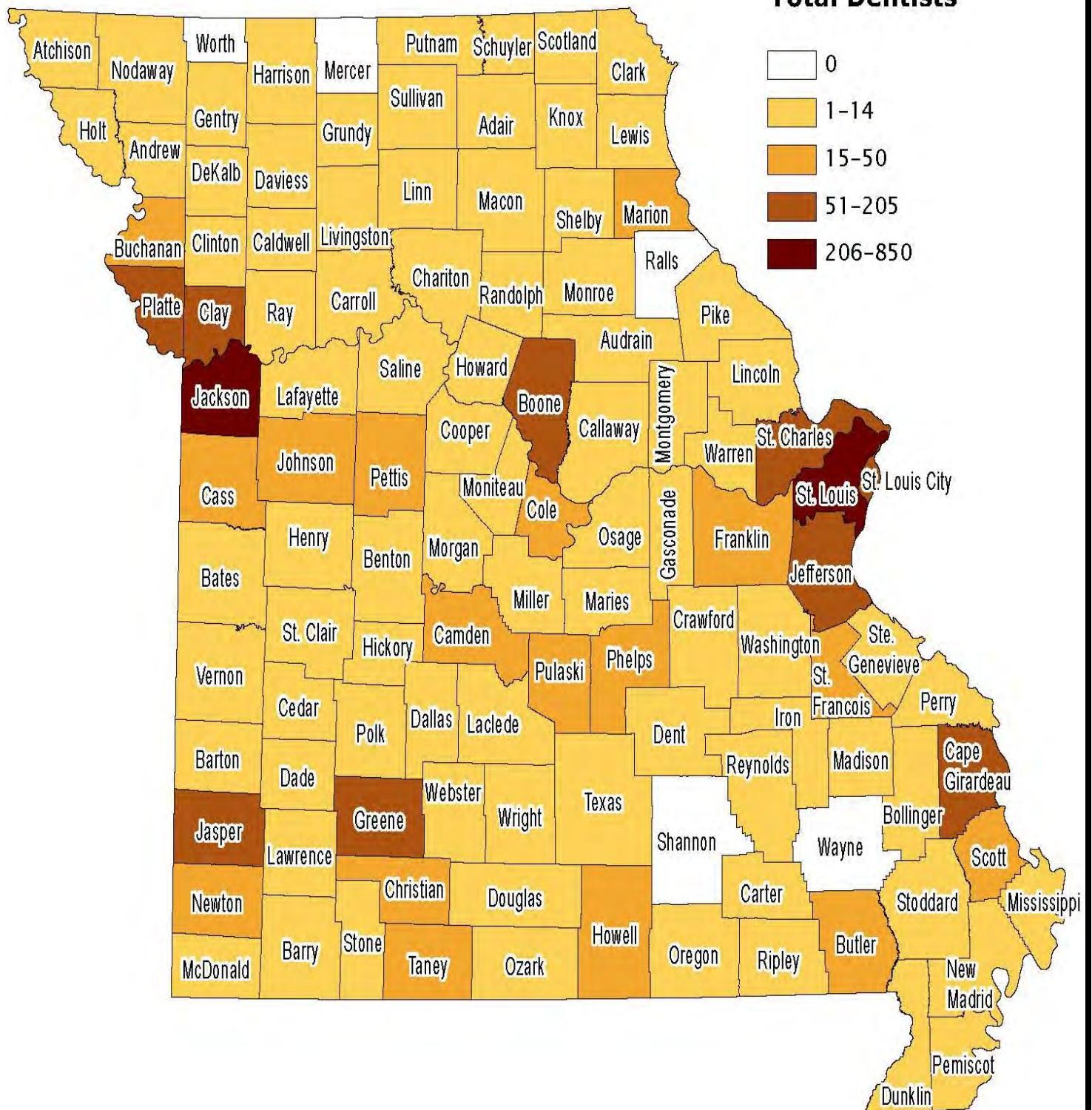
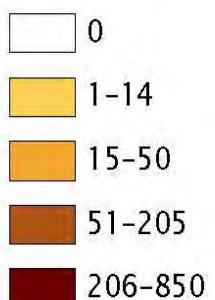
<sup>6</sup> Brian Barnett, Missouri Dental Board, personal communication, January 30, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *State and County Quick Facts*. Missouri population totals. Accessed May 19, 2014 at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/index.html>

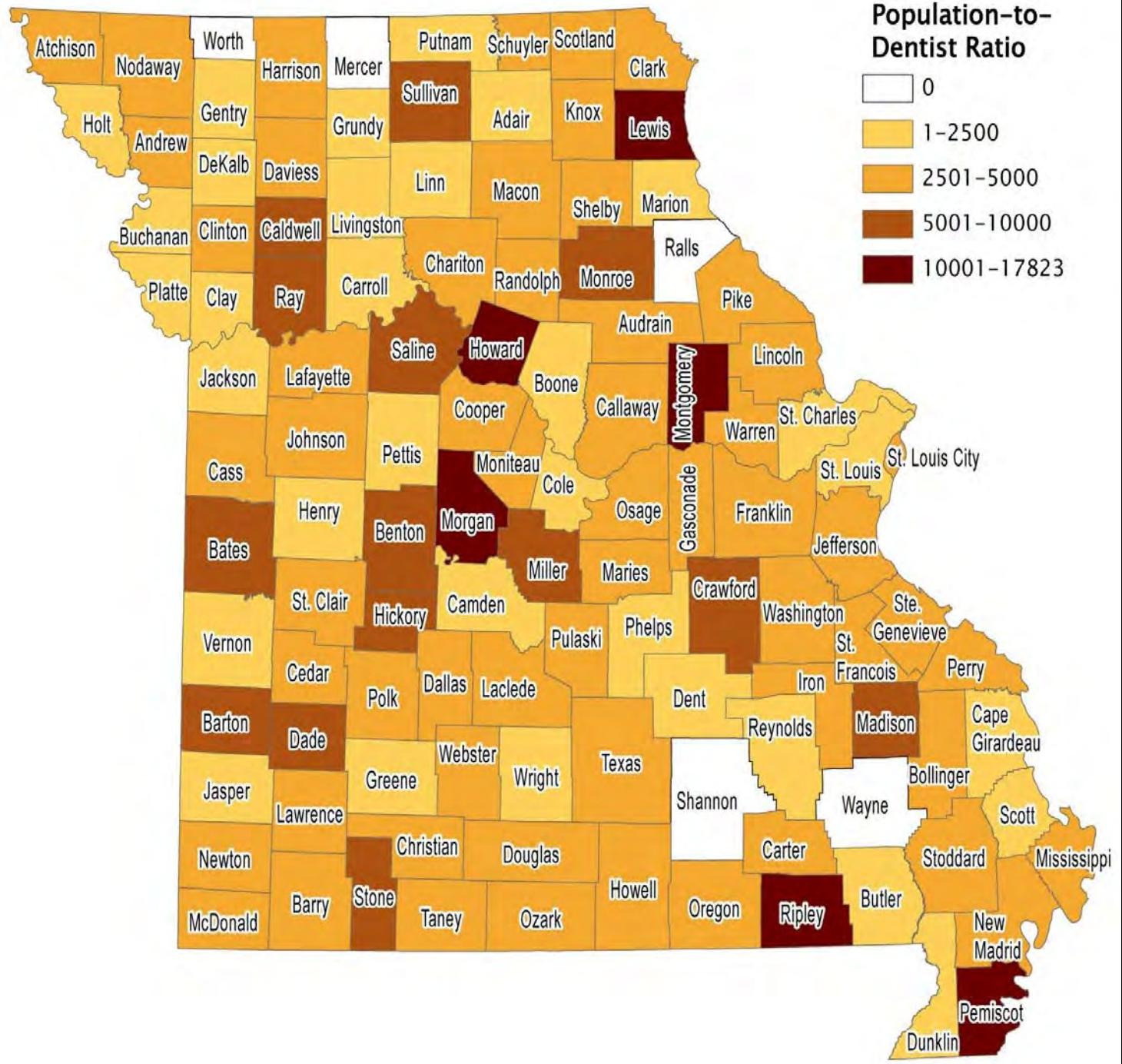
<sup>8</sup> IOM (Institute of Medicine) and NRC (National Research Council). 2011. *Improving Access to Oral Health Care for Vulnerable and Underserved Populations*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

<sup>9</sup> Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, *Health in Rural Missouri*. Defining Rural Missouri. Accessed May 19, 2014 at <http://health.mo.gov/living/families/ruralhealth/pdf/biennial2013.pdf>.

### Total Dentists



**Figure 3.** Dentists per County, Primary Practice or Contact Address



**Figure 4.** Population-to-Dentist Ratio

While the overall state population to dentist ratio is 1,846:1, the average county ratio is 3,748:1. In those counties with a dentist, the lowest ratio is in Marion county (563:1), while the highest ratio is in Pemiscot county (17,823:1). As shown in Figure 4 there is wide variation in individual county population to dentist ratios.

It is critical to remember that a general ratio does not take into account a variety of factors: dentist productivity and hours worked, number of dental hygienists and/or dental assistants in a given practice, and the overall oral health status and needs of the population, just to name a few. But, it does provide a baseline understanding of where one could assume greater access to dental services and potentially better overall oral health.

## **Dental Specialties**

The Missouri Dental Board currently recognizes the following dental specialties: Endodontics, Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (Oral Surgery), Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics, Pediatric Dentistry (Pedodontics), Periodontics, Prosthodontics, Public Health, and Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology.<sup>10</sup> Of the 3,274 Missouri located dentists 511 are dental specialists (Table 1). The most common dental specialty is “Orthodontics” (183).

Specialty	Total	Percent of Total Dentists
General Dentistry	2,763	84.4%
Orthodontics	183	5.6%
Oral Surgery	112	3.4%
Pedodontics	71	2.2%
Endodontics	60	1.8%
Periodontics	59	1.8%
Prosthodontics	22	<1.0%
Oral Pathology	3	<1.0%
Oral Radiology	1	<1.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,274</b>	<b>100%*</b>

Table 1. Dental Specialties \*Numbers do not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding.

## **Practice Setting**

When registering with the BNDD, dentists may select a practice setting for their primary practice location. The top 5 responses can be seen in Figure 5. Of the 2,870 responses from Missouri located dentists, the overwhelming majority, 2,442 (85.1%), selected “Private Office” as their practice setting.

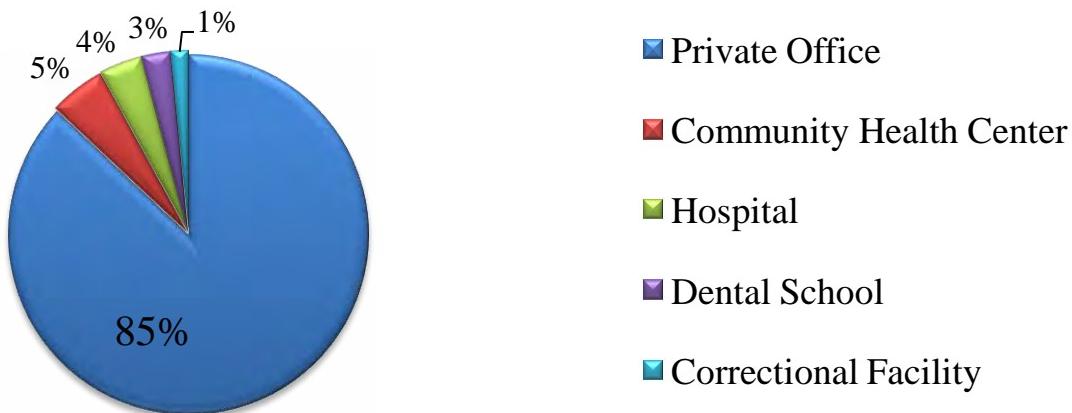


Figure 5. Practice Setting

<sup>10</sup> Missouri Division of Professional Registration, Dental Board, General Rules. Accessed April 2, 2014 at <http://www.sos.mo.gov/adrules/csr/current/20csr/20c2110-2.pdf>